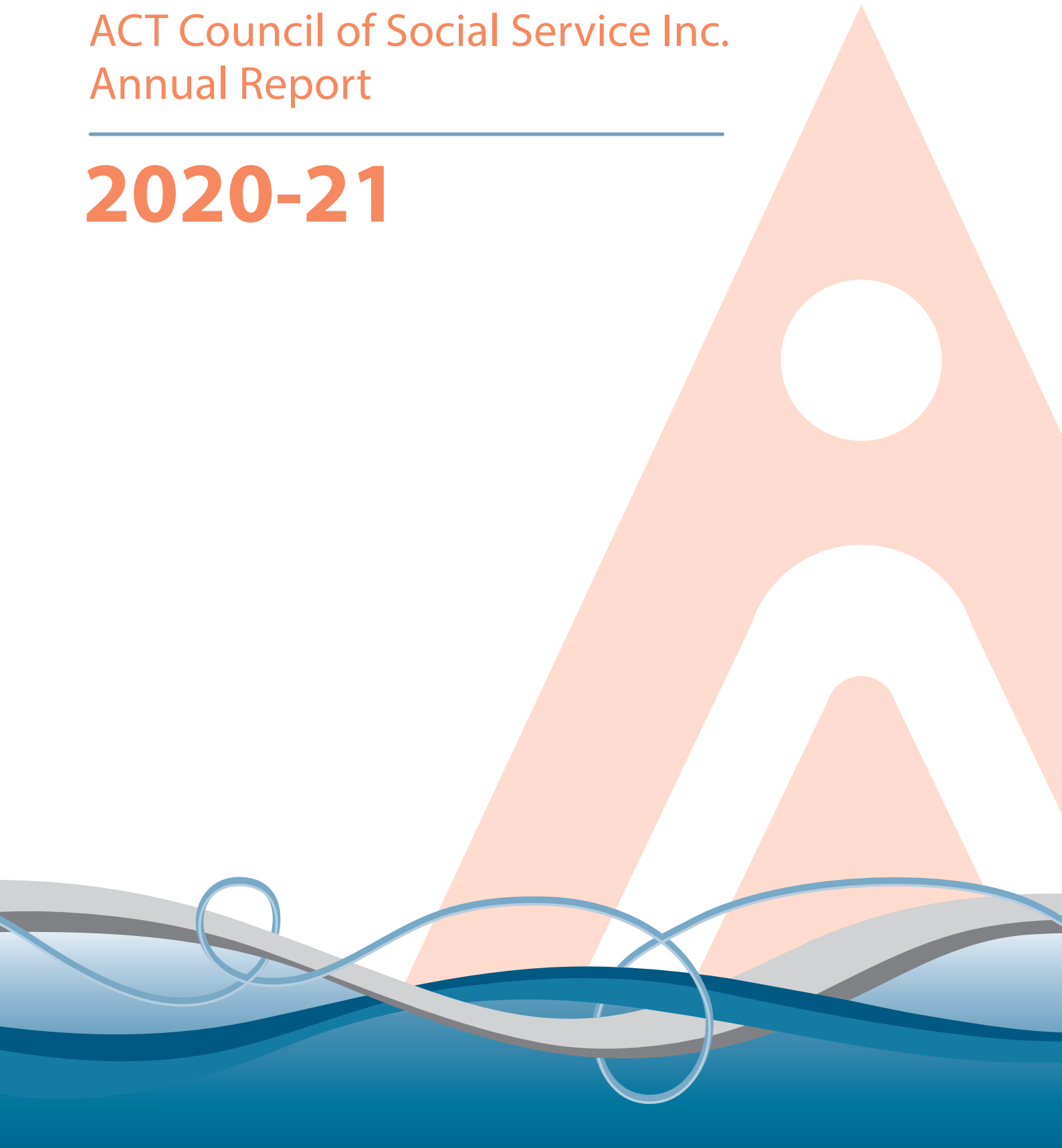




ACT Council of Social Service Inc. Annual Report

2020-21



Acknowledgement of traditional custodians

ACTCOSS acknowledges Canberra has been built on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We pay respect to their Elders and recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. We celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and their ongoing contributions to the ACT community.

Please note:

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this publication may contain the images and names of people who have passed.

Funders

ACTCOSS received funding from:



Partners



What is the ACT Council of Social Service Inc. (ACTCOSS)?

ACTCOSS is a non-profit organisation that advocates for social justice and assists and supports the community sector in the ACT. We do this with support and input from our members – passionate individuals, community-managed organisations and other groups interested in a fair Canberra.

Vision

Our vision is that Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

Strategic objectives

- **Build capacity:** We assist and support organisations to build their capacity so they can provide a service that best meets the needs of Canberrans living in difficult circumstances
- **Promote social justice:** We make explicit and pursue a social justice agenda for the people of the ACT

- **Be an effective peak body:** We function as a peak body for the ACT community sector
- **Strengthen the COSS network:** We participate as part of the national Councils of Social Service (COSS) network.

Want to know more?

Continue reading this report to get an idea about how we make a difference – and how you can join us to make a difference too! There are lots of opportunities for us to work together for positive social change.

You can also find out more on our website actcoss.org.au

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Chair's report



Andrew Rowe
Acting Chair
Associate Member
of ACTCOSS

It is almost certain that every annual report prepared by any organisation in the last two years has mentioned challenges, uncertainty, unprecedented times, insecurity, and similar experiences. For organisations like ACTCOSS, whose sole purpose is the pursuit of social justice and equity, they not only have to face these as an organisation, but also to fight for others who are suffering and often struggle to find the support and help they need.

The ACT has the highest average weekly earnings in Australia, but there are 38,300 people in our community living in poverty. Canberra has the highest median rentals of any capital city, and the cost of living in Canberra has increased significantly relative to other regions in Australia. This is the direct result of both Commonwealth and ACT Government social policy settings, and as a society we have chosen to accept this.

However, as individuals and a community, many of us have chosen to not accept this and advocate for change. We want to advocate, support, encourage, and assist our government and our community to work towards a different future where Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community, and everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

This is the vital work of ACTCOSS.

I am immensely proud of our CEO Dr Emma Campbell and her team who have been indefatigable in promoting social justice, building capacity, being an effective peak body, and supporting other organisations in the social services sector. Some of ACTCOSS's achievements throughout the year are:

- Supporting our members during the COVID-19 response
- Being a strong and balanced voice during the ACT election, placing poverty and disadvantage at the heart of the election campaign and discussions, and hosting the first ever leaders debate broadcast live to the ACT community
- Providing sound and comprehensive inputs to the delayed 2020-21 ACT Budget and then the delayed 2021-22 Budget
- Hosting a COSS summit involving a roundtable with COSS CEOs and Minister Shane Rattenbury on the Raise the Age campaign, followed by a media conference that attracted national media coverage
- Securing continued funding for ACT community organisations for the cost of the Equal Remuneration Order for ACT Government-funded services
- Continuing to provide important and valuable advice to the ACT Government on issues impacting the sector including commissioning and procurement, the response to COVID-19, energy justice, social housing, child protection, and many other social policy issues.

ACTCOSS has remained a strong voice for social equity on behalf of our members and the community, but has nurtured a constructive and positive relationship with the ACT Government.

On behalf of the ACTCOSS Board I congratulate and sincerely thank every member of the ACTCOSS team for their contribution and efforts throughout the year.

I also thank my Director colleagues on the ACTCOSS Board for their contribution and willingness to undertake the challenging and sometimes difficult role.

I look forward to continuing our work together into 2022 as a strong, unified, and committed team.

CEO's report



Dr Emma Campbell
Chief Executive Officer
ACTCOSS

It has been an eventful year for ACTCOSS. Alongside the continuing COVID-19 health and economic crisis, ACTCOSS has engaged with major issues and events including the 2020 ACT election, commissioning and procurement reform by the ACT Government, the impact of the delayed federal and ACT budgets and advocating for member organisations in the face of increased demand from vulnerable people for our members' services.

Through the year and in response to the many challenges and changes that the ACT has faced, the ACTCOSS team has worked hard to ensure that the interests of vulnerable people, and the organisations that support them, are represented and advanced.

I am very proud of the work by ACTCOSS during the 2020 ACT election. ACTCOSS's advocacy during the 2020 ACT election ensured that issues including housing affordability, poverty and inequality were front and centre of the campaign. All major parties attempted to address issues such as Canberra's housing crisis, poverty and inequality, and cost of living for people on low incomes, in their policy platforms. As a result, the Parliamentary and Governing Agreement between ACT Labor and the ACT Greens for the 10th Legislative Assembly reflected many of the policies and priorities put forward by ACTCOSS on behalf of its members.

This included: increased funding for the community sector; raising the age of criminal responsibility; a commitment to build additional social houses; a just transition to net zero emissions; measures to reduce gambling harm; improvements to planning; increased protections for renters; reforms to the child protection system; and more homes built to universal design standards.

Throughout the year, ACTCOSS has continued to advocate on social justice themes including poverty and inequality, housing, health, disability, gender and sexuality, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander self-determination, human rights, justice and corrections, children and families and energy justice. On behalf of its members, it has worked hard to ensure a conducive operating environment for community sector organisations. We have seen improvements in the transparency, accountability and cooperation between the community sector and the ACT Government resulting in better outcomes for vulnerable Canberrans.

ACTCOSS's work and achievements reflect the incredible ACTCOSS team who are driven by their desire to achieve social justice and to challenge unfairness and disadvantage wherever they see it. I am very proud of their intellect, commitment and passion. It has been a joy and a privilege to work with each member of the ACTCOSS team over the past year.

I would also like to thank our incredible members and their workforce who have worked in very difficult circumstances over the past year. ACTCOSS will continue to fearlessly advocate for Canberrans who face vulnerability or disadvantage and the organisations that support them.

Our staff

in 2020-21

CEO



Dr Emma Campbell

Gulanga Program team



Julie Butler
Program Officer
(until Jun 2021)



Kim Peters
Program Officer
(until Jun 2021)

Policy and development team



Craig Wallace
Policy Manager



Geoff Buchanan
Senior Policy Officer
(Research & Data)



Dr Bianca Williams
Senior Policy & CASP
Development Officer
(from Oct 2020)



Dr Gemma Killen
Senior Policy Officer
(from Feb 2021)



Eliza Moloney
Policy Officer
(until Dec 2020)



Ryan Joseph
Capability Officer
(until Jul 2021)



Tara Prince
Policy & Development
Officer
(until Aug 2020)

Operations team



Stephanie Crosby
Operations Manager



Suzanne Richardson
Publications & ICT
Officer



Tashi Choden
Administrative
Support Officer
(from Feb 2021)



Holly Zhang
Info & Events Support
Officer
(until Jun 2021)



Carmen Byrne
Operations Manager
(maternity leave
position)
(from Jul 2020 until
Oct 2021)



Ada Fitzgerald-
Cherry
Admin Support Officer
(from Jun 2020)
Media & Comms
Adviser
(from Mar 2021 until
Aug 2021)

Financial statements

Statement of profit or loss for the year ended 30 June 2021

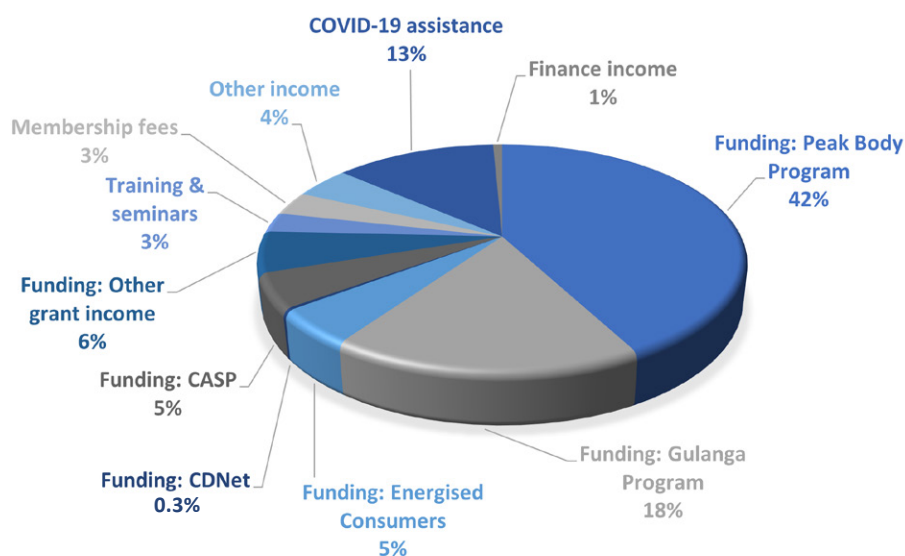
	2021 \$	2020 \$
Grant funding	1,216,362	1,139,628
Other income	170,722	109,300
COVID-19 assistance	206,992	189,336
Finance income	11,707	12,534
Total revenue	1,605,783	1,450,798
Employee expenses	(1,199,771)	(1,089,623)
Accounting fees	(8,596)	(8,527)
Depreciation	(13,002)	(6,364)
External labour & consulting	(90,678)	(55,510)
Meetings & seminars	(16,582)	(8,448)
Publication costs	-	(1,314)
Rent	4,871	(21,921)
Other expenses	(86,531)	(59,004)
Total expenditure	(1,410,289)	(1,250,711)
Deficit from operations	195,494	200,087
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	195,494	200,087

Statement of changes in equity for the year ended 30 June 2021

	Retained surplus \$	Operating reserve \$	Total \$
2021			
Balance at 1 July 2020	255,701	322,688	578,389
Comprehensive income attributable to members	195,494	-	195,494
Balance at 30 June 2021	451,195	322,688	773,883
2020			
Balance at 1 July 2019	55,614	322,688	378,302
Comprehensive income attributable to members	200,087	-	200,087
Balance at 30 June 2020	255,701	322,688	578,389

Find the [full financial report for 2020-21](#) on the ACTCOSS website: actcoss.org.au

2020-21 ACTCOSS income sources



Strategic Plan 2019-2022

Vision Canberra is a just, safe and sustainable community in which everyone has the opportunity for self-determination and a fair share of resources and services.

Purpose ACTCOSS works collaboratively with organisations and individuals who support our vision and goals for positive social change. We advocate to government on social policy, encourage individuals and groups to take action, and provide capacity building services and resources to community organisations. We do all this with support and input from our membership.

Strategic objectives

Build capacity



Assist and support organisations to build their capacity so they can provide a service that best meets the needs of Canberrans living in difficult circumstances by:

- Providing affordable, relevant, timely and effective organisation and workforce development services and resources
- Promoting the value and importance of locally grown solutions and services
- Stewarding implementation of the ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026.

Promote social justice



Make explicit and pursue a social justice agenda for the people of the ACT by:

- Representing the views and priorities of our constituency and our members
- Getting new issues into policy and service reform agendas
- Influencing public debate and decision makers
- Holding the ACT Government to account
- Monitoring progress towards our vision for Canberra.

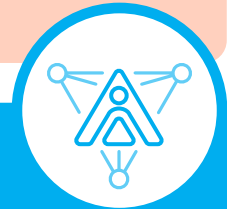
Be an effective peak body



Function as a peak body for the ACT community sector by:

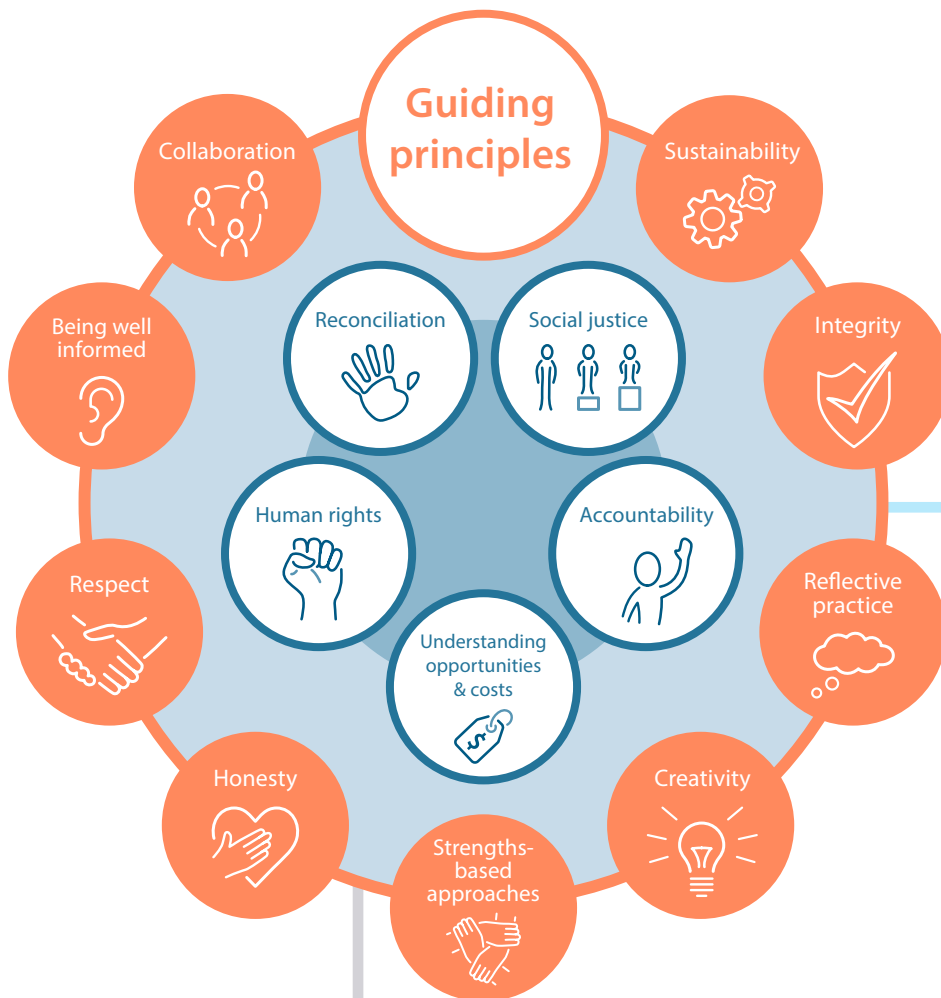
- Securing sufficient resources to sustain a strong staff team, fulfil our mandate and deliver on our ambitions
- Renewing our ICT infrastructure
- Ensuring most effective use of resources
- Expanding our membership reach and engagement
- Building strong alliances and partnerships with people's voice, service provider and business organisations
- Maximising and monitoring our impact on decision makers.

Strengthen COSS network



Participate as part of the national COSS network by:

- Contributing to and supporting social justice advocacy and capability development at the national level
- Sharing information and resources that will increase the reach and impact of COSS.



Ambitions

Social and economic policy reduces inequality

Advocacy agenda is relevant beyond election-led decision-making cycles

Not-for-profit organisations prioritise collective value generation and strong collaborations

Funding for community services ensures sustainable, effective service delivery

Growth of human capital is part of the economic agenda

Guiding documents

ACT Community Services Industry Strategy 2016-2026

The Social Compact: A Relationship Framework Between the ACT Government and Community Sector

ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Agreement 2019-2028

2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart

2016 Congress of Australia's First Peoples Redfern Statement

2016-2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

ACT Community Shared Statements for ACT Elections

ACTCOSS 2021 Stakeholder Survey

In April/May 2021, ACTCOSS conducted our regular stakeholder survey. We received 86 responses, which is the equivalent of about half our membership.

The vast majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that ACTCOSS is delivering on its 2020-21 strategic objectives.



2020-21 achievements

ACTCOSS, its members and stakeholders can celebrate the following positive outcomes that reflect advocacy and campaigns by the ACT community sector and its partners.

ACT election

- Hosted first ever public and interactive live leaders debate in partnership with RiotACT, viewed over 15,000 times
- Poverty, disadvantage and cost of living centre of 2020 ACT election campaign
- Inclusion of key ACTCOSS priorities in the 10th ACT Parliamentary and Governing Agreement including commitments to:
 - Raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age
 - Deliver an additional 140 public houses and 600 affordable rentals
 - Enact minimum energy efficiency standards regulations for rental properties
 - \$50 million to improve building efficiency and sustainability for low-income households
 - Make it simpler for ACT consumers to get better energy deals by requiring electricity retailers to provide a reference price for a typical consumer, and notify customers if a better offer is available.
 - Increase new dwelling site supply to meet increased demand across the housing spectrum
 - Refining land sale processes to allow major sites to be released for high-quality proposals, not just to the highest financial bidder
 - Substantially lifting the quality and sustainability of the design and construction of new developments
 - Improving community consultation and involvement in the development of Canberra
 - All commitments under the reducing harm from gaming while supporting sustainable clubs

- More and better housing options for Canberrans including:

- Increasing emergency accommodation funding through OneLink
- Expanding specialist homelessness service capacity
- Providing additional funding for systemic advocacy in the housing sector
- Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community housing provider
- Developing youth-specific social housing services.

Other positive outcomes

- Expansion of land tax exemption scheme
- Funding for Anti-Poverty Week
- Additional funds for the community sector including mental health services, housing and homelessness services, community legal services and energy justice
- \$9 million to maintain pay levels for community sector workers set out in the Equal Remuneration Order
- Launch of the Women Offenders Framework and move of women detainees back to dedicated accommodation
- ACT corrective services disability action and inclusion plan
- Expansion of free public Wi-Fi.



Livestream of the ACT Election Leaders Debate, 2 September 2020



Alistair Coe MLA, Leader of the Opposition (Canberra Liberals)



Shane Rattenbury MLA, Leader of the ACT Greens



Andrew Barr MLA, ACT Chief Minister (Australian Labor Party)



Audience at the QT conference room



Strategic objective: Build capacity

Commissioning and procurement reform

ACTCOSS is leading the community sector's response to the ACT Government's commissioning and procurement reform agenda including:

- Responses and engagement on the commissioning and procurement process including [Community Sector Position Paper on Commissioning Reform in the ACT](#) (Apr 2021).

Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP)

The ACT Community Assistance and Support Program (CASP) provides community care and supports for people under 65 years with health condition and their carers. ACTCOSS is funded to provide a coordination role including sharing information, facilitating peer networking opportunities for frontline workers and executives with the overall goal of strengthening the working relationship between CASP services, referrers and the ACT Government.

CASP outputs included:

- CASP System Review Report looking at strengths, challenges and opportunities for CASP
- Regular frontline peer networking meetings
- Design and launch of Online Service Vacancy Tool to assist in referral
- Systemic advocacy highlighted by gaps and issues experienced by CASP service providers
- ACTCOSS reported on CASP providers' perceptions of ACT Health's handling of COVID-19 (in an attachment to our Performance Report for the ACT Health Directorate).

Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG)

ACTCOSS holds the Chair of the Industry Strategy Steering Group (ISSG) and provides secretarial support. The ISSG has oversight of the implementation of the ACT Community Sector Industry Strategy. The ISSG met four times in 2020-21. Its work included:

- Development and coordination of the 2021 Service Costing Project in partnership with the Community Services Directorate. This research is being conducted by UNSW Social Policy Research Centre and a final report is expected in December 2021
- A submission to the Joint Standing Committee on the National Disability Insurance Scheme in response to its NDIS Workforce Inquiry. ACTCOSS appeared before the Joint Standing Committee in response to our submission.

Engagement with the education and training sector

- Participated in the ACT Government JobTrainer Industry and Stakeholder Advisory Group, and JobTrainer Community Services Advisory Sub-Group
- Supported the sector to provide input to the Skilled Capital Qualification and Skill Set Lists
- Supported and brokered linkages between Skills Canberra, the community sector, and Registered Training Organisations.

Peer networks

Human Resources Network

This network provides opportunities for community sector human resources professionals to meet and for ACTCOSS to disseminate information. This network regularly online in 2020 and three times in 2021. Issues discussed included:

- Changes to Working With Vulnerable People (WWVP) registration and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) worker screening requirements
- Challenges and sharing of good practice to address recruitment and retention
- Organisational funding and contract compliance.

Reconciliation Network

This network, that supports organisations to prepare and deliver a Reconciliation Action Plan, met five times in 2020-21 to:

- Share and learn from each other on reconciliation
- Develop partnerships for collaboration on reconciliation events and activities
- Discuss topics including evidence-base for policy and measuring outcomes in reconciliation.

Communications Peer Network

This network of communications professionals in the community sector met twice in 2020. The network:

- Shared community sector organisational communications approaches
- Assisted participants develop effective communications during COVID-19
- Explored rebranding experiences from Canberra Capital Region Services (formerly Belconnen Community Service) and Meridian (formerly AIDS Action Council).

Community Development (CD) Community of Practice (formerly CD Peer Network)

This network met regularly online in 2020, and 4 times in 2021 and is co-hosted by ACTCOSS and CDNet to:

- Share practice on place-making among CD practitioners
- Grow the dialogue with practitioners outside the ACTCOSS membership.

Through the Community Development Steering Group, the ACTCOSS network contributed to planning and delivering the Stories of Community Connection and Resilience in a Time of COVID-19 event. At the event, organisations, workers, volunteers, and community members involved in community development had the opportunity to cultivate relationships, share experiences and encourage engagement with ACTCOSS's policy work.

The Community Development Steering Group has received a grant from ACT Government to deliver a follow-up session.

MARCH 29 | 2 -5 PM

THEO NOTARIS MULTICULTURAL CENTRE

ONE YEAR ON: *STORIES OF COMMUNITY CONNECTION AND RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF COVID*

CD.net
community development network

Workshops and training

ACTCOSS hosted workshops, trainings and roundtables including:

- Introduction to Community Sector Advocacy for community sector workers and volunteers. This session, hosted by the ACTCOSS CEO, highlighted the role of peak bodies and how all community sector workers can contribute to advocacy
- Equality in the ACT: The New Discrimination Grounds & Beyond. This webinar for the community sector was hosted by the ACT Human Rights Commission
- Jeff Amatto event. Jeff shared his lived experience and advocating on justice reform. A second visit included facilitated meetings with ACT Legislative Assembly Ministers and MLAs
- OneLink and Support Services in the ACT. This session outlined the challenging yet important work OneLink does, followed by a discussion of how to increase collaborative practice
- Roundtable: ACT Electoral Commission and ACT community sector where the responsibilities of community service organisations under ACT electoral legislation was outlined, followed by Q&A, and a discussion on voting services available this election
- Roundtable: Briefing regarding the Offences Against Vulnerable People Legislation. Representatives from the Justice and Community Safety Directorate and the Attorney General's Office briefed and heard from the community sector on the new legislation.

Some other ways we helped build capacity

- Met with the National Redress Scheme External Engagement team to discuss capacity building opportunities for the community sector and opportunities to collaborate to support ACT organisations and individuals impacted
- Participated in the Health NGO Leadership Group
- Ongoing work and consultation with the sector to support the development of the Wellbeing Indicators to ensure they are meaningful and effective
- [Submission: Secure Local Jobs Code 2020 Review](#) (Nov 2020)
- Worked with Hands Across Canberra to support member organisations to improve fundraising capacity.

Over three quarters of stakeholder respondents agreed that ACTCOSS assists and supports organisations to build their capacity.

– ACTCOSS Stakeholder Survey, May 2021



Information session: OneLink and Support Services in the ACT, co-hosted by ACT Shelter and ACTCOSSA, 25 August 2020



Jeff Amatto, Kim Peters (ACTCOSSA), Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA, Dr Emma Campbell (ACTCOSSA)



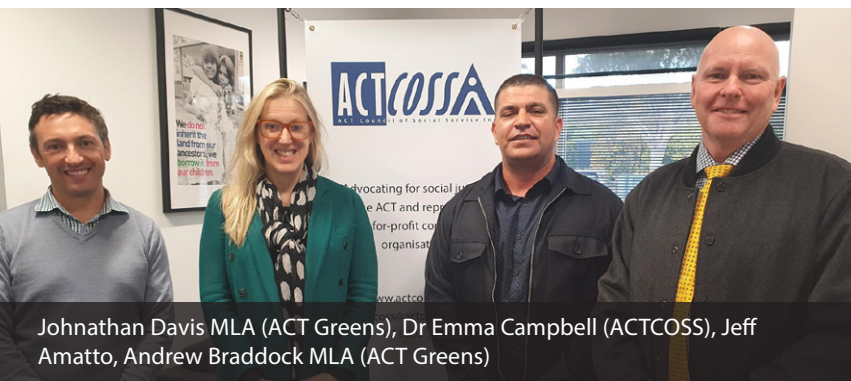
Jeff Amatto event, sharing lived experience and advocating on justice reform, 16 November 2020



Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Canberra Liberals), Jeff Amatto, Dr Emma Campbell (ACTCOSSA)



ACTCOSSA video for Hands Up for Canberra Giving Day organised by Hands Across Canberra



Johnathan Davis MLA (ACT Greens), Dr Emma Campbell (ACTCOSSA), Jeff Amatto, Andrew Braddock MLA (ACT Greens)



Strategic objective: Promote social justice

Publications

ACTCOSS produced a range of advocacy publications on the key issues impacting social justice in the ACT. These included:

- [ACT Cost of Living Report 2020](#) (Sep 2020)
- [Factsheet: Poverty and inequality in the ACT](#) (Oct 2020)
- [ACT Planning Review: Social planning for a changing Canberra](#) (Feb 2021)
- [Submission: ACTCOSS ACT Budget Priorities 2021-22](#) (Jun 2021).

COVID-19 response and policy

ACTCOSS continued to regularly distribute ACT Government information on COVID-19 to our members and subscribers through our email newsletter, eNotices. eNotices continues to have a dedicated section for COVID-19 information.

We continued to work with and provide policy support to the Disability and Carers Policy Group which maintains a focus on COVID-19 responses for services and consumers. This group was facilitated by ACTCOSS.

ACTCOSS continued to work with members and the ACT Government to ensure vulnerable Canberrans, including people with a disability (especially in group residential centres), Alexander Maconochie Centre detainees, people experiencing homelessness, public housing tenants and other vulnerable cohorts, had access to vaccinations, such as through assisting with the opening of the Access and Sensory Clinic.

2020 ACT election

The ACT Legislative Assembly election was held in October 2020. ACTCOSS was active in both facilitating access to information about the electoral process and ensuring the voices and issues affecting vulnerable and disadvantaged people were amplified to parties, candidates and voters. This included:

- Issuing a suite of 12 media releases and issue briefs on: affordable housing and homelessness; climate and energy – achieving a just transition to net zero emissions in the act; better health; targeted action on poverty, inequality, and the cost of living; older Canberrans and aged care; disability; community infrastructure; Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander self-determination; community services; women, children and families; human rights; and justice
- Holding the first ever public leaders debate with all three leaders broadcast live
- Hosting one-to-one Facebook Live conversations with the respective community services portfolio spokespeople
- Engaging with minor party candidates
- Providing information about the voting process and providing opportunities for Elections ACT to meet with the community sector so that authorisation requirements were appropriate and understood, to support access to voting for vulnerable people, and also that access to COVID-safe voting was available
- Meeting with incoming MLAs, Ministers and their staff.

 Aboriginal &/or Torres Strait Islander Self-Determination	 Community Infrastructure	 Affordable Housing & Homelessness	 A Just Canberra	 Disability	 Cost of Living, Financial Hardship & Poverty
 Better Health	 Supporting the Community Services Sector	 Climate & Energy	 A Human Rights Jurisdiction	 Children, Young People & Families	 Older Australians & Aged Care

12 issue briefs for 2020 ACT election

Some other ways we promoted social justice

Consultations and advisory groups

ACTCOSS hosted or participated in consultations, advisory groups and meetings to shape policy and outcomes aimed at improving social justice including:

- ACT Legal Assistance Funding Care and Protection Working Group
- Evoenergy GN21 Submission to the Australian Energy Regulator
- Community Housing Industry Association ACT
- Consultation on Protections of Rights Services Review
- ACT Office of the Inspector of Correctional Facilities Healthy Centre Review of Bimberi Youth Justice Centre
- Axial Steering Group
- Review of Child Protection Decision – Internal Review
- National Indigenous Financial Capability Strategy
- 2020 Anti-Poverty Week Executive Committee
- Ministerial Advisory Council for Women 2021-22 nominations assessment panel
- ACT Energised Consumers Network meetings
- Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission Consultative Committee
- ACT Economic Recovery Engagement Forum
- Gambling and Racing Advisory Committee
- Canberra Gambling Reform Alliance
- Child, Youth and Family Services Program Directors Group
- ACT Raise the Age Coalition
- Roundtables on Overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the ACT Justice System
- Capital Health Network Community Advisory Council.

Selected submissions

In 2020-21, ACTCOSS was proactive in making submissions and writing letters on issues of social justice including:

- [Submission: Light Rail: City to Woden](#) (Jan 2021)
- [Submission: Inquiry into the ACT Budget 2020-21](#) (Mar 2021)
- [Submission: Interactive Gambling Amendment \(Prohibition on Credit Card Use\) Bill 2020](#) (Apr 2021)
- [Submission: Proposed Reforms to Expand Police Use of Body Worn Cameras in Private Contexts](#) (May 2021)
- [Submission: Inquiry into the management of ACT school infrastructure](#) (May 2021)
- [Submission: Inquiry into the Drugs of Dependence \(Personal Use\) Amendment Bill 2021](#) (Jun 2021).

Energy justice and policy

ACTCOSS gratefully received funding from Energy Consumers Australia and the ACT Government for its ACT Energised Consumer Project. ACTCOSS also received funding from Evoenergy to represent consumers on network issues. Selected outputs from these projects included:

- [Submission: Evoenergy's Gas Network 2021-26 Access Arrangement Proposal to the Australian Energy Regulator](#) (Aug 2020)
- [Submission: ICRC Issues Paper: Review of Methodologies for the Weighted Average Cost of Capital](#) (Oct 2020)
- [Submission: Issues Paper on the Review of the Retail Electricity Form of Price Control](#) (Dec 2020)
- [Submission: Inquiry into Renewable Energy Innovation in the ACT](#) (Apr 2021).

Nearly 90% of stakeholder survey respondents agreed that ACTCOSS makes explicit and pursues a social justice agenda for the people of the ACT.

– ACTCOSS Stakeholder Survey, May 2021



Strategic objective:

Be an effective peak body

ACTCOSS secured additional resources to sustain a strong staff team, fulfil our mandate and deliver on our ambitions, including:

- Energy Consumers Australia Grant
- Community Services Directorate COVID-19 Stimulus Grant
- Hands Across Canberra Grant
- Deloitte Impact Day Grant.

ACTCOSS has also invested in renewing our information and communication technology infrastructure including additional laptops and equipment to allow all staff to work flexibly and efficiently from home and a major purchase of video conferencing equipment for ACTCOSS to hold professional online meetings. The video conferencing equipment has been used to hold a range of major events including the live Facebook interviews during the ACT election with the each party's spokesperson on community sector issues; the ACTCOSS annual general meeting; ACT Budget forums; ATSIComSec Network meetings; workshops and other events.

ACTCOSS continued to build strong alliances and partnerships with people's voice, service provider and business organisations. ACTCOSS successfully partnered with peak bodies including the ACT Property Council and the Canberra Business Chamber to call on the Legislative Assembly to reinstate peak body and community involvement in ACT Budget Estimate Hearings. ACTCOSS is a member of the ACT Property Council Social Sustainability Committee and has worked closely with the Property Council on key community issues including transition to net zero emissions and investment in social housing.

Other successes

- ACTCOSS received the Chief Minister's Gold Award for 50+ years in the ACT
- ACTCOSS received a Commendation in the 2020 ACT Multicultural Awards category ACT Community Organisation (Multicultural Champion) Award.

ACT Community Sector NAIDOC Week Event Online

Whilst official NAIDOC Week celebrations had been deferred, the ACT community services sector still wanted to bring the community together to commemorate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures during NAIDOC Week via a digital event. The event included guest speakers and performances around the NAIDOC Week theme of 'Always Was, Always Will Be'.



Providing leadership as a peak body

ACTCOSS continued to engage and support our members and stakeholders through a variety of important activities on issues including:

ACT Budget

ACTCOSS continued its role as the coordinator for the community sector's engagement with the ACT Government in the lead up to the Budget. ACTCOSS arranged opportunities for the community sector to put forward its budget proposals to the ACT Government in a series of online meetings with senior ACT Government officials before the Budget. ACTCOSS assisted with the coordination of the COVID-safe online lockup and provided a Budget bulletin to the ACT community sector on Budget night outlining key announcements and gaps. Following the release of the Budget, ACTCOSS hosted briefings for members to understand impacts of the Budget on the ACT community sector.

ACT Multiple Enterprise Agreement

ACTCOSS provided support to and coordinated consultations on the Multiple Enterprise Agreement for ACT community sector workers.

Other key activities

Media appearances

ACTCOSS maintained strong relationships with local media to ensure ACTCOSS powerfully represented the views and priorities of our constituency and our members and held the ACT Government to account.

Journal

ACTCOSS released 2 editions of our journal, with each accessed approximately 120 times from our website.

- [Update, Issue 93, June 2021: Celebrating and supporting the ACT's community sector workforce](#) (Jun 2021)
- [Update, Issue 92, Summer 2020-21: Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples: Stories of good practice in the community sector](#) (Dec 2020).

ACT Portable Long Service Leave Scheme

ACTCOSS has worked with the ACT Long Service Leave Authority and sector colleagues in respect to potential changes to advocacy organisation inclusion in the ACT Portable Long Service Leave Scheme.

In 2020-21 we received confirmation that advocacy organisations could remain in the scheme following the introduction of required legislative instruments. ACTCOSS continues to advocate for substantive changes to the legislation to ensure advocacy organisations are eligible for participation in the ACT Portable Long Service Leave Scheme.

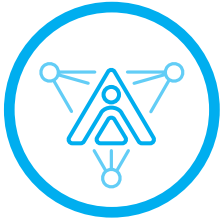
Other activities

- Met regularly with Hands Across Canberra and participated in the Canberra Day Campaign, raising \$3000
- Regular ACTCOSS member meetings to share information and to offer peer support
- Regular ACTCOSS peak body meetings to build shared agendas and coordinated advocacy strategies and activities.



76% of stakeholder survey respondents agreed that ACTCOSS fulfils its role as a peak body for the ACT community sector.

– ACTCOSS Stakeholder Survey, May 2021



Strategic objective:

Strengthen the COSS network

ACTCOSS continued to be an active and influential participant in the national Councils of Social Service (COSS) network.

In June 2021, ACTCOSS hosted the first post-COVID-19 face-to-face COSS Directors meeting focused on raising the age of criminal responsibility. As part of the meeting, COSS Directors met with the ACT Attorney General, Minister Shane Rattenbury, and Minister for Youth Justice, Emma Davidson MLA, to discuss how other jurisdictions could follow the lead of the ACT and raise the age of criminal responsibility to age 14.

The COSS Directors also took the opportunity of being in Canberra to spend a day advocating at the Australian Parliament on shared goals of the COSS network.

ACTCOSS joined ACOSS and other COSS partners to make submissions to the Australian Government on key social security legislation reflecting the specific issues facing people in the ACT on low incomes:

- [Submission: Inquiry into the Social Services and Other Legislation Amendment \(Extension of Coronavirus Support\) Bill 2020](#) (Nov 2020)
- [Submission: Strengthening Income Support Bill 2021](#) (Mar 2021).

Other activities as part of the COSS network

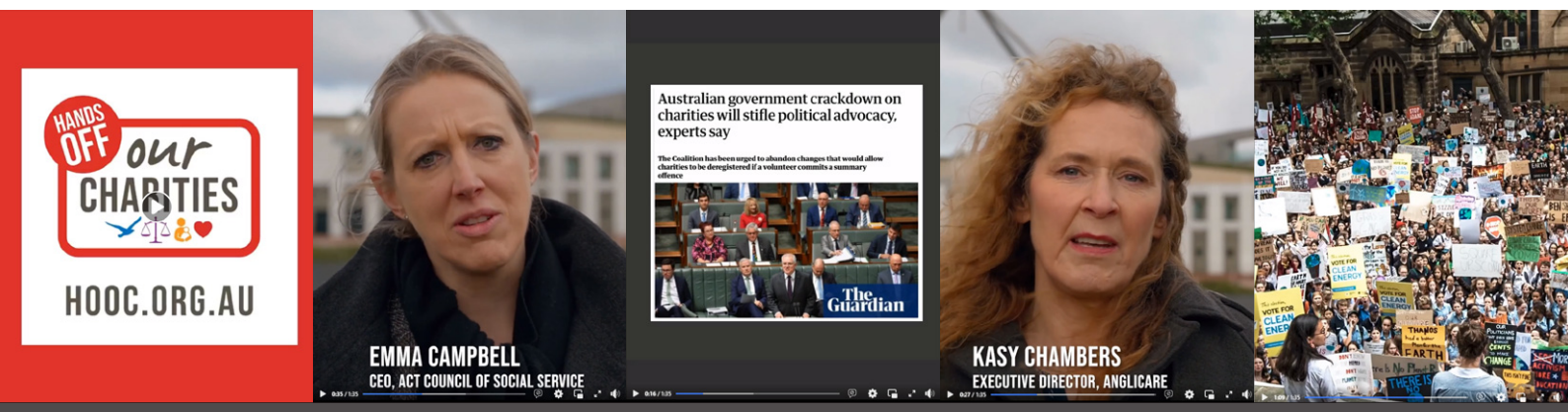
- ACTCOSS continued to be part of the national COSS network and a partner to ACOSS, and participated regularly in various policy networks
- ACTCOSS promoted ACOSS's Australian Community Sector Survey to ensure representation from the ACT community sector
- ACTCOSS participated in the ACOSS National Bushfire and Climate Summit and co-signed the National Bushfire Summit Report and Recommendations
- [Joint ACOSS Submission to the Energy Security Board Post-2025 Market Design Consultation Paper](#) (Oct 2020)
- Took part in Raise the Rate for Good National Day of Action (social media contributions and handwritten cards to federal members)
- Supported and provided input to [Health of the Nation Energy Market – Current and emerging affordability issues for people on low incomes](#) (Dec 2020)
- Regular media releases on cuts to the Coronavirus Supplement to JobSeeker and other payments in coordination with ACOSS as well as broader Raise the Rate for Good campaigns
- Active in campaign with ACOSS and the Hands Off Our Charities (HOOC) coalition to campaign against proposed changes to Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Regulation. ACTCOSS represented the COSS network in the HOOC press event at Federal Parliament.

76% of stakeholder survey respondents agree that ACTCOSS participates effectively in the COSS network.

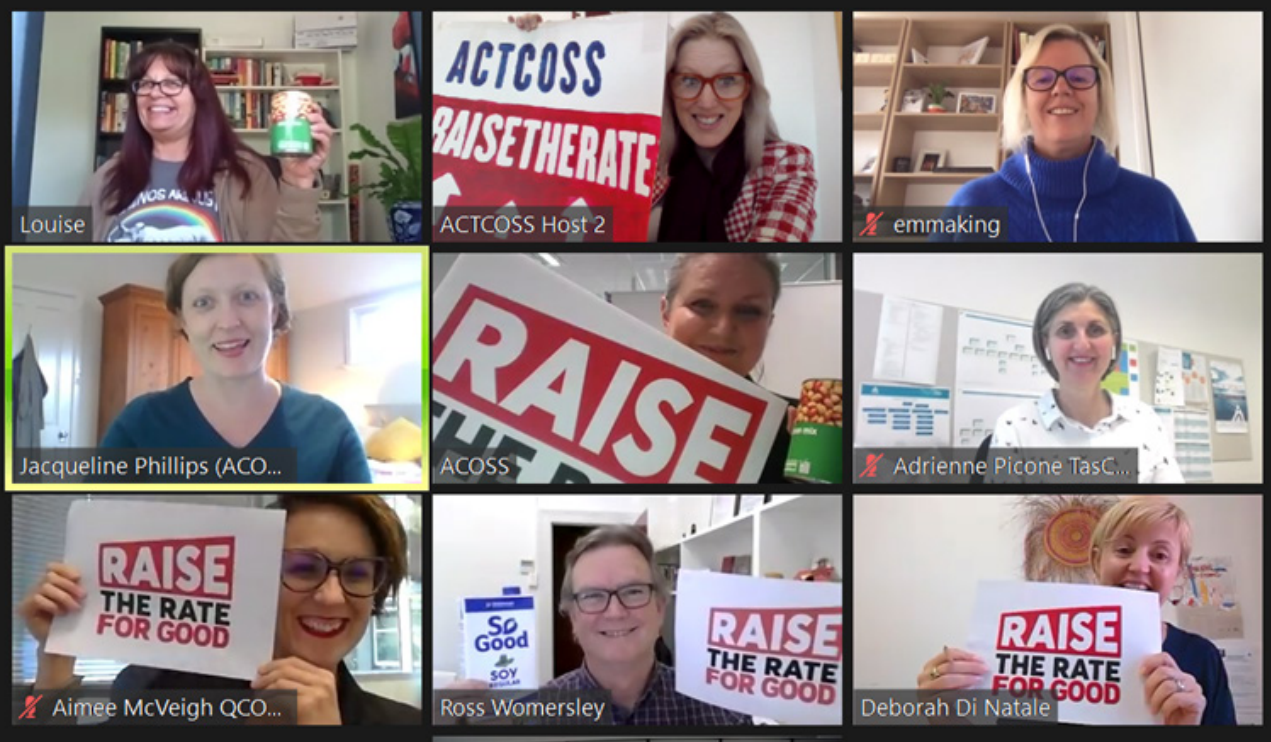
– ACTCOSS Stakeholder Survey, May 2021



COSS Directors with the ACT Attorney General and Minister for Youth Justice calling for all governments to #RaisetheAge of criminal responsibility from 10 years to 14 years.



Hands Off Our Charities campaign video



COSS Directors holding placards for the Raise the Rate for Good National Day of Action on 14 July 2020



Gulanga Program

The Gulanga Program is designed to support ACT community sector organisations to develop and improve upon good, culturally appropriate practice standards. The program employs Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers and aims to provide better engagement with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families to access the services that will best meet their needs.

The program is supported by funding under the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA), which is jointly funded by the ACT and Australian governments, and the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP), an ACT Government funded initiative. Highlights from this year's work by the Gulanga Program are listed here.

Supporting good practice

Gulanga attended many meetings with community sector organisations and ACT Government directorates and agencies to promote good practice and work to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the ACT. This included:

- The development of culturally inclusive resources
- Information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander services
- Support with recruitment and retention
- Individual advice to community sector organisations.

Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit (CASAT)

The [Cultural Awareness Self-Assessment Toolkit \(CASAT\)](#) is a set of good practice standards developed to assist community service organisations improve the quality of their services to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander clients and communities, and to strengthen the organisation's knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures.

In 2020-21 Gulanga distributed 122 hard copies of the CASAT and it was accessed online 341 times. This year Gulanga partnered with the Australian Government's Boosting the Local Care Workforce to distribute CASAT to Commonwealth funded disability and aged care providers in the ACT.

Training and information sessions

The Gulanga Program hosted a range of training and information sessions including:

- Cross-Sector Information Session with Yeddung Mura providing information for non-Aboriginal community sector organisations on the work of Yeddung Mura including its programs and resources, future goals, partnership and events
- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Program, with Julie Moore
- Strategic Indigenous Awareness: To understand our present we must understand our past, with Grant Sarra
- Cultural Awareness on Country Tour, with Richie Allan.



Painting at the Burrunjū Art Workshop for Community Sector Staff, 10 November 2020

Supporting Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander workers

ACTCOSS continues to provide a space for Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander community sector workers and volunteers to network, share and receive information, with an opportunity for cultural supervision, peer support and mentoring with other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff.

ACTCOSS held regular ATSIComSec Network meetings including an event for female-identifying workers on International Women’s Day and the ATSIComSec Network Christmas Lunch.

The peer support offered through the ATSIComSec network was critical as workers have navigated a challenging year, sometimes working from home, facing increased workload and the need to protect their health and the health of family members in the midst of a pandemic.

Improving cultural awareness

NAIDOC Event: Burrunjū Art Workshop for Community Sector Staff – 10 November 2020

ACTCOSS invited members and community sector organisations to participate in a small-scale art workshop facilitated by Greg Joseph, an artist at the Burrunjū Aboriginal Art Gallery to enable community sector workers to engage with and celebrate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures and to provide a chance to yarn with members of the Aboriginal community in Canberra.

“To be totally honest I think it was probably one of the best ways to engage in NAIDOC Week. The conversations we had with Greg and doing some artwork at the same time was just great! I was disappointed we didn’t have more people come along as I think the experience was very worthwhile!”

“The setting for the workshop was fantastic. I attended today because celebrating NAIDOC Week is important to me. I felt relaxed and re-energised. I am so glad I registered for the workshop.”

Art workshop participants

13th Anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations – 12 February 2021

ACTCOSS, the Gulanga Program team and the Dhunlung Yarra Service team from Relationships Australia Canberra and Region invited the community sector and other stakeholders including ACT Policing, politicians and ACT directorates to come and reflect together on the resilience and survival of our First Nations peoples in Australia. This year we focused on the theme of 'Resilience, survival and being Aboriginal at heart'.

Volunteers performed through storytelling and dance to allow viewers to share in the strength and resilience of Australia's First Peoples. We remember that this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.



Other Gulanga events for NAIDOC Week

Community Sector Afternoon Tea with Yeddung Mura – 10 November 2020

Gulanga and Relationships Australia supported Yeddung Mura to hold a community sector NAIDOC partnership event. The event attracted around 70 people including representatives from the ACT Government including the Community Services Directorate and the Justice and Community Safety Directorate, Legal Aid ACT, Care Inc, Carers ACT, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB), other community organisations including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations.

Burrunju Aboriginal Corporation – NAIDOC Day and Art Exhibition – 11 November 2020

ACTCOSS and the Gulanga Program offered in-kind support to Burrunju's NAIDOC Day and Art Exhibition by providing some administrative assistance, such as helping to design flyers and promoting the event to the sector and other stakeholders. The event attracted around 80 people throughout the afternoon including politicians from all parties, community sector, general public, ACT Government and the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community. Gulanga's participation aimed to support Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to link the broader Canberra community with celebratory and cultural aspects of Canberra's First Nations peoples.

2021 National Reconciliation Week

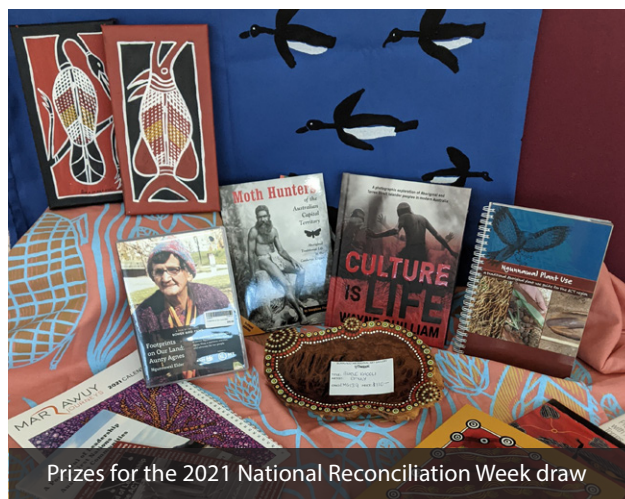
In recognition of [National Reconciliation Week 2021](#), and Reconciliation Day (ACT public holiday), ACTCOSS invited ACT community sector workplaces to share a response to the question:

"How is your workplace taking action, more than words, to be more effective with actively addressing and speaking up about issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?"

The winner of the major prize draw was [Belconnen - A Village for Every Child](#), who won a range of resources.

The winner of the Staff Encouragement Award prize was the [ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations](#).

The winner of the CEO's Award for Ingenuity in Reconciliation prize was [Canberra Community Law](#).



Belconnen – A Village for Every Child receiving their Reconciliation Week prize. From left: Dr Emma Campbell (ACTCOSS), two representatives from A Village for Every Child, Julie Butler (ACTCOSS).

Our Board

Director	Attended 2020-21	Apol.
Frances Crimmins, YWCA Canberra Chair (Nov 2020 – Aug 2021) Ordinary Director (Nov 2019 – Nov 2020)	7/7	0
Glenda Stevens, Associate Member Chair (Nov 2018 – Nov 2020)	3/3	0
Andrew Rowe, Associate Member Vice Chair (Nov 2020 –)	4/4	0
Martin Fisk, Menslink Vice Chair (Nov 2018 – Nov 2020)	3/3	0
Bruce Papps, Northside Community Service Treasurer (Nov 2018 – Aug 2021)	4/7	3
Alicia Flack-Kone, ACT Down Syndrome Association Ordinary Director (re-elected Nov 2020 –)	7/7	0
Amanda Tobler, Community Services #1 Ordinary Director (Jun 2021 – Aug 2021)	0	0
Andrew Scotford, CIT Student Association Ordinary Director (Nov 2018 –)	7/7	0

Director	Attended 2020-21	Apol.
Beth Slatyer, Associate Member Ordinary Director (re-elected Nov 2020 –)	5/7	2
Cathi Moore, Associate Member Ordinary Director (Nov 2020 –)	4/4	0
Darlene Cox, Health Care Consumers' Association Ordinary Director (Nov 2019 – Aug 2021)	5/7	2
Diane Bakon, Associate Member Ordinary Director (May 2021 – Aug 2021)	1/1	0
Dorji Tshering, Associate Member Ordinary Director (Nov 2020 – Aug 2021)	4/4	0
Elizabeth Samra, Associate Member Ordinary Director (Nov 2019 – Aug 2021)	7/7	0
Lee Maiden, Communities@Work Ordinary Director (Nov 2018 – Jun 2021)	6/6	0
Petrea Messent, Dementia Australia Ordinary Director (Nov 2017 – Nov 2020)	2/3	0
Sarah Murdoch, Anglicare NSW South, NSW West & ACT Ordinary Director (Nov 2019 – Sep 2021)	5/7	2

Members

Member Organisations

A Gender Agenda
ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations
ACT Disability, Aged & Carer Advocacy Service Inc.
ACT Down Syndrome Association Inc.
ACT Mental Health Consumer Network Inc.
ACT Playgroups Association Inc.
ACT Shelter
Advocacy for Inclusion
Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT Inc.
Anglicare NSW South, NSW West and ACT
ANU Student Association

Argyle Community Housing
Asthma Australia
Australian Association of Social Workers ACT Branch
The Australian National University Postgraduate and Research Student Association
Australian Red Cross - ACT/SE NSW
Australian Unemployed Workers' Union - Canberra Branch
Barnardos Australia
The Benevolent Society
Beryl Women Inc.
Better Renting
Canberra & Q'yan ADD Support Group Inc.

Canberra Alliance for Harm Minimisation and Advocacy
Canberra Alliance for Participatory Democracy (CAPaD)
Canberra Community Law
Canberra Institute of Technology Student Association
Canberra Multicultural Community Forum (CMCF) Inc.
Canberra Police Community Youth Club (PCYC)
Canberra Rape Crisis centre
Canberra Refugee Support Incorporated
Canberra Youth Residential Services
The Cancer Council ACT

Capital Health Network
 Capital Region Community Services
 Care Inc.
 Carers ACT Inc.
 CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn
 CHC Affordable Housing
 Communities@Work
 Community Connections
 Community Medics Australia Limited
 Community Radio 2XX Inc
 Community Services #1
 Companion House
 Conflict Resolution Service Inc.
 Council on the Ageing ACT
 Dementia Australia ACT
 Directions Health Services
 Diversity ACT Community Services
 Domestic Violence Crisis Service
 Doris Women's Refuge Inc.
 Duntroon Community Centre
 Environmental Collective Housing
 Organisation Inc.
 Epilepsy Association ACT (Inc.)
 EveryMan Australia Inc.
 Families & Friends for Drug Law
 Reform (ACT) Inc
 Families ACT Inc.
 Family Drug Support
 The Food Cooperative Shop
 Foundation for Indigenous Recovery &
 Development, Aust. (FIRDA)
 GMIT
 GROW - ACT
 Gugan Gulwan Youth
 Aboriginal Corporation
 Havelock Housing Association Inc
 headspace Tuggeranong (Grand
 Pacific Health)
 Health Care Consumers' Association
 Heart Support Australia
 Hepatitis ACT Inc
 Isaac's Band of Brothers & Sisters Inc.
 Justice Action
 Karinya House Home for Mothers &
 Babies Inc.
 Karralika Programs Inc.
 Koomarri
 L'Arche Geneseret
 Lone Fathers
 Majura Women's Group
 Marymead
 Master Plumbers ACT
 Mengengineering

Menslink Inc.
 Mental Health Community
 Coalition ACT
 Mental Health Foundation
 Mental Illness Education ACT
 Meridian Inc
 The Mill House
 Nexus Human Services
 Northside Community Service Ltd.
 Palliative Care ACT
 Parentline ACT Inc.
 Pegasus Riding for the Disabled Inc.
 People with Disabilities ACT Inc.
 Perinatal Wellbeing Centre
 Positive Youth Incorporated
 Prisoners Aid (ACT) Inc.
 Rebus Theatre
 Red Nose
 Relationships Australia Canberra
 and Region Inc.
 Religious Society of Friends
 Canberra Inc.
 Roundabout Canberra
 RSI & Overuse Injury Association of
 the ACT, Inc.
 SEARMS Aboriginal Corporation
 Sexual Health & Family Planning
 ACT Inc.
 Sharing Places Inc.
 The Smith Family
 Softlaw Community Projects Limited
 St John's Care
 St Vincent de Paul Society
 Canberra/Goulburn
 Technology for Ageing and Disability
 (ACT) Inc
 Ted Noffs Foundation
 Tenants' Union ACT
 This Is My Brave Australia Inc.
 TJILLARI Justice Aboriginal Corporation
 Toora Women Inc.
 Tuggeranong Link Community Houses
 and Centres Inc
 UCA Canberra Region Presbytery
 UnionsACT
 Uniting
 UnitingCare Kippax
 VolunteeringACT
 Warehouse Circus Inc.
 Wellways Australia
 Woden Community Service Inc.
 Women With Disabilities ACT
 Women's Electoral Lobby (Australia), Inc.

Women's Health Matters Inc.
 Women's Legal Centre (ACT
 Region) Inc.
 Yeddung Mura Aboriginal Corporation
 Yerrabi Yurwang Child & Family
 Aboriginal Corporation
 Youth Coalition of the ACT
 YWCA Canberra

Affiliate Members

Victim Support ACT
 Wellcare Australia

Associate Members

Z. Adamaly	J. Le
L. Akauola	D. Lucas
C. Ansted	K. Lyttle
D. Bakon	K. Martin
V. Begonja	J. McGee
A. Boisen	A. McLaughlin
J. Carty	P. Messent
L. Church	C. Moore
H. Cornthwaite	K. Nesor
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J. Craig	K. Ormston
J. Crawford	B. Papps
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A. Ferguson	E. Samra
A. Gupta	C. Sefian
M. Hansen	B. Slatyer
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L. Hemmings	G. Stevens
P. Humphries	H. Swift
L. Jard	D. Tshering
P. Kendall	R. Vassarotti
J. Kitchin	E. Wensing
N. Kitchin	

Members who have elected to be published in our annual report are listed here. You can change your preferences by contacting us.

Member numbers for 2020-21

- Associates: 54 (21 new)
- Organisations: 131 (9 new)
- Affiliates: 2

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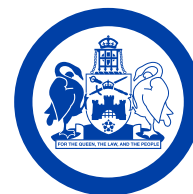
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